

Message Text

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PAGE 01 MOSCOW 05266 211001Z
ACTION AGRE-00

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 EB-08 COME-00 CIAE-00 INR-10
NSAE-00 /031 W

-----069406 211228Z /11

R 210959Z MAR 78
FM AMEMBASSY MOSCOW
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 9304

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DEPT PASS USDA FOR FAS/FCA/NOVOTNY/ESCS/POPE

E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: EAGR, EPAP, UR
SUBJECT: EUROPEAN USSR WEATHER SITUATION

1. WEATHER FORECASTS FOR EUROPEAN USSR FOR MARCH 19 AND 20 SHOWED COLD FRONT MOVING INTO AREA, INCLUDING MOSCOW, LENINGRAD, PREBALTICA, CENTRAL CHERNOZEM AND KIEV. MINIMUM TEMPERATURES FOR MARCH 19 WERE PREDICTED IN THE MINUS 10-15 DEGREE C. RANGE WITH LOCALITIES AS LOW AS MINUS 18. KIEV WAS TO BE MINUS 1 TO 3 C., BUT ODESSA, KISHINEV AND N. CAUCASUS WERE STILL IN WARM FRONT AREA WITH TEMPS WELL ABOVE FREEZING. MARCH 21 IZVESTIA WEATHER MAP PREDICTS WARMER TEMPS IN N.W., S., CENTRAL ASIA AND AS FAR EAST AS KRASNOYARSK IN THE CHERNOZEM ZONES.

2. NIGHTTIME TEMPS IN MOSCOW DURING NIGHTS OF MARCH 18-19 AND 19-20 WERE BELOW FREEZING BUT NO LOWER THAN MINUS 5 C. IN MOSCOW. HIGHS DURING DAY WERE SLIGHTLY ABOVE FREEZING. SKIES CLEAR ON BOTH DAYS, AND NO SNOW ON EITHER DAY OR ON 18TH. SPRING BLIZZARD CONDITIONS PREVAILING ON MARCH 21 ALTHOUGH WEATHER MAP SHOWS NO FRONT ANYWHERE NEAR MOSCOW. KIEV ADVANCE PARTY REPORTS NIGHTTIME LOWS SLIGHTLY BELOW FREEZING EACH NIGHT SINCE NIGHT OF MARCH 18-19

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IN KIEV, BUT 1 TO 1-1/2 INCH NEW SNOW FELL DURING NIGHT OF 19-20. THIS DISAPPEARED DURING DAY, BUT ABOUT AN INCH OF SNOW FELL ON NIGHT OF MARCH 20-21. ODESSA TEMPERATURES FOR MARCH 20 AND 21 WERE PREDICTED AT 10 TO 15 C. RANGE.

3. SNOW COVER LINE AS OF MARCH 17 WAS REPORTED BY EMBASSY AUTO TRAVELLERS TO BE JUST ABOUT AT THE BORDER OF THE

UKRAINE AND THE RSFSR ON THE OREL/KIEV HIGHWAY. TRAVELERS WERE NOT AGRICULTURALISTS. THEY NOTED ONLY ONE FIELD WITH "GREEN SPROUTS" ENROUTE, AND NO, REPEAT NO, OBSERVATIONS WERE MADE ON STATUS OF WINTER GRAINS.

4. COMMENT: SITUATION CONTINUES SOMEWHAT DANGEROUS TO WINTER CROPS IN EUROPEAN USSR. WE HAVE INADEQUATE INFO AS USUAL TO ASSESS EXTENT OF DAMAGE, IF ANY, FROM PROBABLE RETURN OF MINUS 5 TO 10 C. TEMPS OVER PAST WEEKEND AND FREQUENT FREEZING AND THAWING IN WIDE AREAS WITH LITTLE OR NO SNOW COVER. DAILY FREEZING AND THAWING ALONG WITH ICE FORMATION MAY, OF COURSE, BE JUST AS DESTRUCTIVE TO WINTER GRAINS AT THEIR PRESENT STAGE OF GROWTH AS VERY LOW TEMPS, BUT THEIR CAPACITY TO WITHSTAND COLD IS ALSO LOWER THAN IN MID-WINTER. POSSIBILITY THEREFORE EXISTS THAT SOME DAMAGE WAS SUSTAINED BY CROPS DURING THIS COLD SNAP, BUT WE ARE UNABLE TO APPRAISE THE EXTENT. APPARENTLY, SOUTHERN EXTREMITIES OF EUROPEAN USSR WHERE VEGETATION GROWTH HAD FULLY RESUMED WERE NOT HIT BY THIS COLD AIR MASS. NEW SNOW COVER WILL AGAIN PROVIDE SOME PROTECTION IF IT WAS GENERAL. SEEDING OF SPRING GRAINS REPORTED IN CENTRAL PRESS ON MARCH 21 AS FAR NORTH AS ROSTOV. TOON

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 jan 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: REPORTS, METEOROLOGICAL DATA
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 21 mar 1978
Decaption Date: 01 jan 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 20 Mar 2014
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1978MOSCOW05266
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D780124-0213
Format: TEL
From: MOSCOW
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1978/newtext/t19780343/aaaabjzg.tel
Line Count: 84
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: 693961c0-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ACTION AGRE
Original Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 05 may 2005
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: N/A
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 3256814
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: EUROPEAN USSR WEATHER SITUATION
TAGS: EAGR, EPAP, UR
To: STATE
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odhc://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/693961c0-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Sheryl P. Walter
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
20 Mar 2014
Markings: Sheryl P. Walter Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 20 Mar 2014